

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-03 IO-13  
EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /095 W  
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P 041506Z AUG 78  
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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4480

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: PEPR, SY, EG  
SUBJ: GROWING EXPECTATIONS FOR SYRO-EGYPTIAN RECONCILIATION

1. SUMMARY: BELIEF APPEARS WIDESPREAD THAT PRINCE FAHD  
EXPLORED POSSIBILITY FOR CONVENING MINI-SUMMIT TO RECONCILE  
ASSAD AND SADAT AND BAIT USED HERE WAS HELP FOR SYRIA IN  
ITS LEBANON IMBROGLIO. SOME HERE BELIEVE US IS TACITLY  
SUPPORTING FAHD'S INITIATIVE BECAUSE ISRAELIS "WILL NOT  
RESPOND POSITIVELY TO US PROPOSALS WHILE THE ARABS ARE  
WEAK AND DIVIDED." NOTICEABLE SHIFT IN JORDANIAN AND  
SAUDI ATTITUDES IS SEEN AS FURTHER ENCOURAGING SYRIA TO  
ATTEND A MINI-SUMMIT SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WILL  
NOT BE POLITICALLY ISOLATED. TO DATE, SYRIAN PRESS AND  
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OFFICIALS HAVE GIVEN NO SIGH THAT ATTITUDES TOWARD SADAT HAVE  
EASED BUT NEITHER DID THEY PRIOR TO RIYADH MINI-SUMMIT IN  
1976. UNMISTAKABLE EXPECTATION HERE IS THAT SADAT INITIA-  
TIVE IS WINDING DOWN AND SYRO-EGYPTIAN RECONCILIATION IS ONLY  
A QUESTION OF TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. BELIEF APPEARS WIDESPREAD HERE THAT FAHD'S VISIT DEALT

WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVENING A MINI-SUMMIT WHICH WOULD RECONCILE PRESIDENT SADAT AND ASSAD. SADAT'S EXPULSION OF ISRAELI MILITARY DELEGATION AND HIS REFUSAL TO MEET WITH THE ISRAELIS UNTIL THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT CHANGES ITS ATTITUDES ARE SEEN AS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK THAT WOULD PERMIT SYRIA TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A CONFERENCE. WHILE THIS DOES NOT YET FULLY MEET SYRIA'S CRITERIA THAT SADAT TOTALLY ABANDON HIS INITIATIVE AND AGREE TO COORDINATE FULLY WITH HIS ARAB PARTNERS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, FROM SYRIA'S VIEWPOINT, IT IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. MENA'S EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATIVE HERE CLAIMED TO POLOFF THAT IN SYRIAN LEADERSHIP'S VIEW ISRAEL WILL NOT CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS. ACCORDING TO THIS ANALYSIS IT WOULD BE FUTILE FOR US TO OFFER PROPOSALS NOW WHICH IT KNEW BEGIN WOULD REJECT. EXPECTATION IS THAT "A NEW PHASE" WILL COMMENCE IN INTER-ARAB RELATIONS SHORTLY AFTER SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE FROM THE REGION.

3. MENA REP AND SOME OTHERS HERE SEEM CONVINCED THAT US IS TACTILY SUPPORTING FAHD'S RECONCILIATION ATTEMPTS DESPITE PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF IT IN THE US SINCE US KNOWS ISRAEL WILL NOT BE MORE FLEXIBLE SO LONG AS ARABS ARE WEAK AND DIVIDED. SYRIA IS SEEN AS BEING MORE AMENDABLE TO RECONCILIATION ATTEMPTS THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE SADAT'S JERUSALEM VISIT BECAUSE OF ITS GRAVE DIFFICULTIES IN LEBANON AND THE BELIEF THAT SYRIA'S STAND TOWARD THE INITIATIVE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOW BEING VINDICATED.

4. ARGUMENT GOES THAT SYRIA CANNOT UNILATERALLY SOLVE ITS PROBLEM IN LEBANON WITHOUT SOLID ARAB POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT. THIS SUPPORT HAS BEEN LACKING SINCE SYRIA'S SPLIT WITH EGYPT. THUS, ISRAEL FEELS FREE TO THREATEN SYRIA WITH INTERVENTION IN LEBANON, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT NO ARAB COORDINATION PRESENTLY EXISTS.

5. MOREOVER, NOTICEABLE SHIFT IN JORDANIAN AND SAUDI ATTITUDES TOWARD SYRIAN POSITION IN RECENT DAYS WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR SYRIA TO BE PERSUADED TO SIT DOWN WITH SADAT. FOLLOWING KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT HERE ON JULY 20 JOINT SYRO-JORDANIAN HIGHER COMMITTEE FOR INTEGRATION MET UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE RESPECTIVE PRIME MINISTERS ON AUGUST 2-3. AFTER SADAT'S VISIT, ONLY INFREQUENT MEETINGS OF THE VARIOUS SYRO-JORDANINA SUB-COMMITTEES OCCURRED BECAUSE OF SYRIA'S DISPLEASURE WITH HUSSEIN'S EQUIVOCAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS SADAT. DECISION TO REVIVE COMMITTEE AT SENIOR LEVEL SUGGESTS SYRIA IS NOW CONFIDENT THAT HUSSEIN UNLIKELY TO ENTER INTO ANY DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL UNDER PRESENT FRAMEWORK. FAHD'S ALLEGED DISENCHANTMENT WITH

CURRENT STATE OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD ALSO REASSURE SYRIA THAT SYRIA WILL NOT BE ISOLATED OR FORCED INTO UNPALATABLE CONCESSIONS AT ANY MINI-SUMMIT HELD UNDER SAUDI AUSPICES.

6. TO DATE, SYRIAN PRESS HAS SHOWN NO SIGN OF EASING ITS CRITICISM OF SADAT BUT THE SAME PATTERN HELD TRUE AFTER THE SINAI II AGREEMENT UNTIL SYRIA AND EGYPT WERE RECONCILED AT THE RIYADH SUMMIT IN OCTOBER 1976. HOWEVER, ASSAD IS NOT LIKELY TO SIT DOWN WITH SADAT BEFORE SOME PROTRACTED BAR-GAINING OCCURS. FIRST SECRETARY OF SAUDI EMBASSY HERE (WHO MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO TALKS) AFTER SAHD'S DEPARTURE DESCRIBED THE SYRIANS AS "STILL A LITTLE INFLEXIBLE."

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7. UNMISTAKABLE EXPECTATION HERE, HOWEVER, IS THAT SADAT'S INITIATIVE IS WINDING DOWN AND IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL FORMULA IS FOUND TO RECONCILE ASSAD AND SADAT AND TO RESTORE SEMBLANCE OF UNITY TO ARAB RANKS.  
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## Message Attributes

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